

VZCZCXRO1752  
PP RUEH DU RUEHGI RUEHJO RUEHMR  
DE RUEH KI #1093/01 1881024  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
P 071024Z JUL 06  
FM AMEMBASSY KINSHASA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4329  
INFO RUEHXR/RWANDA COLLECTIVE  
RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC  
RHMFISS/HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE  
RUFOADA/JAC MOLESWORTH RAF MOLESWORTH UK

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 KINSHASA 001093

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SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PREF](#) [PGOV](#) [KPKO](#) [CG](#)  
SUBJECT: UN PROTECTION CLUSTER WORKS TO STABILIZE NORTH AND  
CENTRAL KATANGA

REF: A. KIN 638

[1](#)B. KIN 747

[1](#)1. (SBU) Summary: During a June 17-18 visit to Kalemie, Katanga, Poloff held meetings with humanitarian groups represented in the UN protection cluster, a newly formed channel for addressing violence against populations. The protection cluster in Kalemie faces particular challenges dealing with rampant insecurity, a massive IDP population, and low local capacity. End summary.

What is a protection cluster?

[1](#)2. (SBU) The Kalemie UN protection cluster, a cooperative working group for the protection of civilians in north and central Katanga, was created in early 2006 in response to massive humanitarian crises in the region (Ref A). As does its sister cluster in Lubumbashi, the Kalemie cluster focuses on violence against the population, IPDs, and refugees, but excludes developmental issues such as water, health, and education beyond emergency access. Composed of UN and local agencies, the cluster serves not only as a forum for the exchange of information, but also as a place for humanitarian agencies to work together to persuade authorities, neutralize misinformation, and effectively campaign for additional assistance.

UN members of the Kalemie cluster are the UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR); the UN Office of Coordination for Humanitarian Assistance (OCHA); the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Food Program, and the MONUC Kalemie Child Protection, Civil Affairs, and Human Rights Offices. International NGO members of the Kalemie cluster are: Caritas, Alisei, Danish Church Aid, IFESH, and Medecins du Monde France -- all of whom have local offices in Kalemie.

Instability in Tanganyika

[1](#)3. (SBU) The Kalemie cluster is striving to be effective despite the massive obstacles it faces in the unstable Tanganyika district encompassing north and central Katanga. According to UNHCR representatives, the biggest problem is exactions by the Mai Mai, the FARDC, and security agencies (septel), including sexual violence, extortion, arbitrary arrest, and appropriation of land. The cluster is also working on the problem of reinsertion of ex-combatants and the question of peaceful cohabitation between ex-combatants and refugee/internally displaced persons (IDPs) populations. According to the OCHA representative, some of the estimated 200,000 IDPs have started to return to Kalemie and other Tanganyika district towns since renegade Colonel Gedeon's unbrassaged militia, which had been destabilizing central

Katanga, surrendered to MONUC (Ref B). Unfortunately for those returning, there is no food, and they have missed two growing seasons. Because it's in an insecure zone, humanitarian groups cannot deliver aid. Meanwhile, Congolese armed groups are harassing the population for food. Malnutrition and illness are becoming rampant, but medical infrastructure, such as it is, is localized in towns. In the last few months, the UNHCR representative and protection cluster chair noted, there has been a big humanitarian response to the crisis, but problems of security and infrastructure, especially roads, have made it difficult to access needy populations.

¶4. (SBU) Further complicating the matter is that, according to UNHCR, there is simply not much local capacity. Many of the agencies in the protection cluster have no local partner with an ability to assist the population; nearly all noted that the international community presence in the district is feeble. Despite the now-famous International Crisis Group report, IDPs in Katanga are in a precarious situation. The protection cluster members are also very concerned about the anticipated departure of MONUC. They fear that once upcoming elections have taken place, donors will believe all is well and push for an end to the UN mission. In those circumstances, said the UNHCR representative, the situation would become "unmanageable."

¶5. (SBU) Comment: As with MONUC, UN and local humanitarian groups feel overwhelmed with the scale and extent of problems in north and central Katanga. They also feel overlooked by national and international government agencies and donors who focus more on the Kivus and Ituri than on the equally volatile Tanganyika district. Despite the good news of Gedeon's arrest and new Mai Mai demobilizations, the

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population displacement and its after-effects are only beginning to be recognized. The UN protection cluster, which allows humanitarian workers to pool their influence and expertise, is a first step toward both publicizing the needs of the region and attempting to address them. End comment.  
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